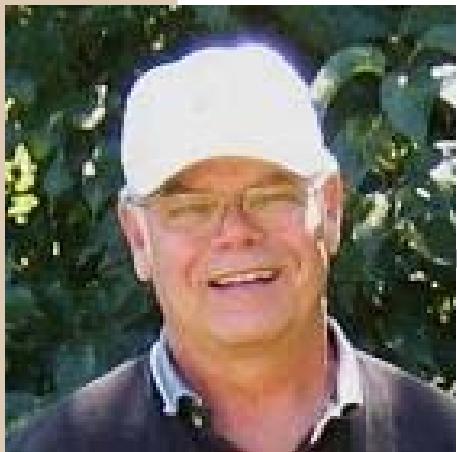


# Spark Gap

Volume 25, Issue 11, November 2008 **MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities for Twenty-Five Years**



Jack Parker,  
W8ISH, MARC  
President

*The Official  
Newsletter of the  
Mid-State Amateur  
Radio Club*

**MARC**

Mid-State Amateur  
Radio Club  
P.O. Box 836  
Franklin, IN 46131  
[www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org)

a ARRL Affiliated Club.

Three books and a CD: The 2009 ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications, The ARRL Satellite Handbook, the ARRL General Class License Course (book and instructional CD) and 50 Years of Amateur Radio Innovation — Transmitters, Receivers and Transceivers: 1930-1980 are available for sale.

This year's ARRL Field Day results are available online.

ARRL worked with the Pennsylvania state legislature as it considered and then passed a PRB-1 bill. It was then signed into law by the governor.

In response to an ARRL Petition, the FCC amended an experimental high power license to eliminate frequencies in the Amateur Radio 40 meter band.

Students from seven nations attended the USTTI Amateur Radio Administration Course (ARAC) at ARRL Headquarters.

Several HQ staff volunteers hosted Scouts at W1AW during the 2008 Jamboree on the Air.

The Third Annual ARRL On-Line Auction ran from October 23-31.

ARRL West Gulf Division Director Coy Day, N5OK, presented Fred Fish W5FF (SK) Memorial Award Plaque #1 to Lee Fish,

## ARRL IN ACTION: AN UPDATE

This story — including convenient Web links to useful information — is a concise monthly update of some of the things ARRL is doing on behalf of its members. This installment covers the month of October. The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is

K5FF.

Duncan MacLachlan, KU0DM, of Prairie Village, Kansas, is the new ARRL Youth Editor, and as such will write the *Youth@HamRadio.Fun* column.

ARRL HQ staff hosted 14 new Section Managers during the 16th annual New Section Manager Workshop.

These online course sessions begin Friday, November 21, 2008: Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Level 2 (EC-002); Antenna Modeling (EC-004); HF Digital Communications (EC-005); VHF/UHF — Life Beyond the Repeater (EC-008), and Radio Frequency Propagation (EC-011).

### **ARRL** *Update*

The 2008 Simulated Emergency Test was October 4-5.

ARRL Official Observers and the FCC assisted Ohio hams in tracking down an ongoing source of interference — a continuous string of “dits” caused, it turns out, by a ham’s cat leaning against a keyer paddle.

Nominations are open until December 31 for the 2008 ARRL International Humanitarian Award.

The December issue of QST and the November/December issues of NCJ and QEX have been released to the printer.

The winner of the QST Cover Plaque Award for September is Jim Weit, KI8BV, for his article “An All Band HF Dipole Antenna.”

On the Air: The ARRL International EME Competition was October 18-19 (and will be November 15-16). The 75th running of ARRL Sweepstakes will be November 1-3 (CW) and November 15-17 (Phone).

**Editor's Note:** Check out the ARRL website (you don't have to be a member) and see what is happening at the National Association level.

# ARRL VEC Announces Exam Fee Increase



## Officers

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**Spark Gap**

On November 6, The ARRL VEC announced that as of January 1, 2009, the fee to take an ARRL Volunteer Examiner (VE)-administered Amateur Radio license exam will increase by \$1, from \$14 to \$15. According to ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, ARRL VE teams may retain up to \$7 of this fee to directly reimburse their teams' out-of-pocket examination expenses; currently, VE teams keep \$6. This is the first time in four years that the examination fee has been adjusted.

Somma said that the FCC allows VECs to collect an examination reimbursement fee from each candidate who takes one or more exam elements. "VEs and VECs may be reimbursed by examinees for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in preparing, processing, administering or coordinating an examination for an amateur operator license (FCC Rule §97.527)," she said. "These exam fees help the VEC recover its costs of providing its services."

Somma said that every examinee at each ARRL coordinated examination session is charged the same fee in accordance with the annually established fee schedule: "Any person sitting for an exam, or having a new license or upgrade processed at a test sessions, must pay the exam fee applicable for the calendar year. The ARRL VEC's exam fee for calendar year 2009 is \$15. Each time a candidate pays one exam fee, they are entitled to take tests for Elements 2, 3 and 4 as needed, up to all three elements under the single exam fee. Each time an examinee retakes an exam element (assuming the VE Team has different exam design available), another exam fee is charged."

Somma pointed out that business expenses such as postal, utility, fuel and printing charges, are increasing: "Our VE teams are feeling the effects of the current economy, too! Teams are retaining reimbursement at amounts considerably larger than previous years. The amount of out-of-pocket costs that our VEs and the VEC are expending to provide authorized services in connection with Amateur

Radio operator examinations continues to rise."

Recent ARRL VEC cost-cutting steps have included staff reduction, reduced printing charges of ARRL VE training material and exam software, renegotiating shipping and printing contracts and eliminating lesser-used services.

"Only so many cost-cutting measures can be justified without cutting back significantly on services essential to our VE teams, our customers and our program," Somma said. "As a result, an adjustment was needed in the 2009 exam reimbursement fee if we intended to maintain the basic levels of service that our VEs, VE teams and candidates have come to expect."

Somma said that the ARRL VEC permits its VEs to retain a portion of the exam fees they collect to directly reimburse themselves for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in setting up and conducting their examination sessions. "As long as the expense is warranted and has been prudently incurred — and the expense is specifically related to exam administration — then the fee can be retained," she said. "The team should keep a complete record of the expenses paid (with receipts) in team records for two years. Records must be made available to the ARRL VEC upon request. Costs not related to the exam session processes or paperwork are not reimbursable."

"We believe that the ARRL VECs level of assistance and services are outstanding," said ARRL Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer, WJ1B. "Exam supplies, such as paperwork and software, shipping costs both to and from the VEC and ARRL VE accreditation, as well as credentials, are all free of charge for our VEs. We maintain a toll-free number for our VEs and we even offer reimbursement to the VE team for their expenses. We appreciate the dedication and volunteerism of all our VEs in the field. This is why we offer so many services free of charge. This is why we have that same level of duty and commitment here. Every test fee we collect goes right back into the VEC program and to serving the Amateur Radio community."

# Club Updates

## Updating ARES/RACES

As we approach the end of the year it is time for a little housekeeping. If you have updated or added new equipment or have moved and are a member of ARES/RACES, please see Linda KC9GCH at the December meeting for an application to fill out.. If you wish to join and provide emergency communication services, please see Linda for a ARES/RACES form. Completed forms should be given to Bob LaGrange, N9SIU or Dave Daily, KB9LOT. They will send them on to Tug Sutton, the Johnson County Emergency Management Director.

## Annual Dues

It's almost that time again. Club dues will be due in January for 2009. Please see the club treasurer, Steve Carmean, K9DY, at the December meeting and pay your club dues at that time. Full member dues at \$18.00 per year for membership in MARC. Your dues help keep the Repeater up and running, pays for insurance fees and other operating expenses and provides us with our website.

Full members are those who have a valid amateur radio license. Full members may vote and hold office. Associate members are those who are licensed and/or unlicensed without the privilege of voting and/or holding license. Associate member dues are \$10.00 per year.

## Updating Roster

It's also time to let us know if any of your personal information has changed. Have you moved recently? Have a new vanity call sign? Let us know as in December we will be handing out a membership roster for the first time. Only paid members will be listed (name and call sign only). This roster will be available at quarterly meetings. You must be a member to be listed.

## Club Officers

If you haven't picked up the new club officer one page handout, please go to the Club Officer page on line. You will see a link to the document there.

# VEC Testing

Our Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) team is ARRL accredited, and capable of administering any amateur radio test. As a public service, the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club sponsors test sessions after all but one of its monthly meetings. (September testing is done prior to the picnic.) Meetings begin at 8:00 AM with testing following the meeting (begins about 9:30 AM until 11:00 AM). We would love to have you join us for the meeting. For directions to the meeting and/or test site, please check out our website at [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org).

**WA9RDF**  
**Repeater**  
**146.835/**  
**146.235 MHz**  
**151.4 Hz PL**  
**Tone**

**Weekly Net**  
**Every Sunday**  
**at 7PM EST**

***Tune in to hear  
the ARRL  
Newsline!***

# Speakers

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is looking for speakers for our monthly meetings in 2009. If you have an interest in a particular part of the amateur radio hobby and are willing to share your interest, please contact one of the officers of the club. Do you collect older pieces of radio equipment, go fox hunting on a regular basis, or have an interest in satellite/amateur radio communications? If so, then it's time to share with others in the hobby.

If you've never put together a presentation, contact Linda KC9GCH and she will help you put together your information. If you know of a neighbor or friend that has a story to tell about communications during extreme weather events or disasters, let us know who they are. We would love to have them come to a meeting and share their experience.

We invite other Amateur Radio clubs to come to our meetings and give us an update on what the club is doing, how it is growing, and what events you are planning. We look forward to your presentations.

*The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club sponsors a weekly traffic and social net on our repeater. The net begins at 7:00 p.m. local time, and features local news, announcements, and NTS traffic, as well as rebroadcasts of Amateur Radio Newsline.*

## Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills. Newsline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby. For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to [netcontrol@midstatehams.org](mailto:netcontrol@midstatehams.org), and we will record your check-in!



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317.887.2558

*Spark Gap*

# 2008 Schedule of Events

## November 2008

### 15 MARC Meeting - CANCELLED

VEC Testing beginning about 9:00 AM; Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

### 15-16 Fort Wayne Hamfest, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Allen County War Memorial Coliseum & Exposition Center  
Saturday 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM; Sunday 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
Go to [www.fortwaynehamfest.com](http://www.fortwaynehamfest.com) for more information

### 17 Technician Class #4 of 4

6:30 PM to 8:30 PM; White River Township Fire Department Training Room, SR 135 & Olive Branch Road, Greenwood, IN

### 27 Thanksgiving Day

### 29 Evansville Hamfest, Evansville, Indiana

8:00 AM to 1:00 PM; Vanderburgh County 4-H Center  
Go to <http://w9ear.org> for more information

## December 2008

### 6 SKYWARN/NWS Appreciation Day

Check out the local National Weather Service website for additional information

### 20 MARC Meeting - 8 AM

VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am); Kit building also begins immediately following the meeting. Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

### 25 Christmas Day

## Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

**See our website, [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org), for maps on how to get to our meeting.**